

## 14

## Juvenal's Fifteenth Satire

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Juvenal's Fifteenth Satire is an unpopular and misunderstood poem, largely because it has been studied too often in order to document the satirist's alleged exile in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The merits of the satire therefore remain unexamined even though it is his last complete poem. My reconsideration will discuss two unexplored characteristics of the poem: first, the vocabulary carefully elaborated by Juvenal and, second, the structure of the satire, which develops a paradox because the satirist begins by stating that men should not act like animals but ends by using the natural sociability of animals as a standard to criticize human depravity. In this satire as in his earliest works, Juvenal's wit and literary artistry will resist a one-dimensional interpretation which treats a complex, ambiguous poem as a moral tract or rhetorical declamation on a conventional theme. When Juvenal moralizes, we must be prepared for irony and paradox; and when

<sup>1</sup> The exile is mentioned explicitly in the manuscript *vitae*, but the best scholars are now disposed to believe that they do not provide authentic, independent biographical data about Juvenal. They suggest that the events described in them are based partly on conjecture from the contents of the satires themselves and partly on *topoi* from the biographical literary tradition established by Suetonius. See P. Wessner, *Scholia in Iuvenalem Vetustiora* (Leipzig, 1931; *BT*), XXXVI, who insists that the *vitae* are historically unacceptable and most likely originated as a fiction of a *homo semidoctus*. G. Brugnoli, "Vita Iuvenalis," *Studi Urbinati*, 37 (1963), 5-14, though casting doubt on every other event mentioned in the *vitae*, does accept the notice of the exile as perhaps the single event related which antedates the formation of the scholiastic tradition on Juvenal, although even this notice was expanded on the basis of references in the Fifteenth Satire (27-28 and 44-46) as well as *Sat.*, 4.38. However, U. Knoche, *Die römische Satire* (Göttingen, 1971<sup>3</sup>), 91, is more extreme and interprets the exile as a legend developed in the second half of the fifth century. His views are supported by M. Coffey, "Juvenal 1941-1961," *Lustrum*, 8 (1963), 169-170, who also remarks that literary form and satiric conventions may explain much of the content of the satires without references to biographical motives or social context. R. Syme, *Tacitus* (2 vols., Oxford, 1958), 499, note 9, assesses Juvenal's exile as "a fictitious construction."

he resorts to rhetorical commonplaces, we must look for creative adaptation.

A successful interpretation of the poem must begin by reading the satire in its entirety. For example, in his brief but useful chapter Gilbert Highet<sup>2</sup> overemphasizes the personal element, the historicity, and the topicality of the satire, because there is much more to the poem than the historical event mentioned in lines 33-92. Similarly, the commentaries, although they regard the satire as a conventional attack against "Egyptian cannibalism," put the stress on "Egyptian" and tend to view the satire as a document which is meant to criticize the horrible practice of the Egyptians from the ordinary Roman point of view.<sup>3</sup> This interpretation ignores Juvenal's positive exhortation to *humanitas* in the later part of the satire. Other more limited views of the poem have been offered which either read the satire as an instance of a rhetorical *locus de crudelitate*,<sup>4</sup> or interpret it as a parody of aretology.<sup>5</sup>

My own reading of the satire follows a recent suggestion by W. S. Anderson that the poem modulates between a vice labelled as *ira*, which is attacked in the first half (1-92), and the virtue, *humanitas*, which is espoused as an ideal in the second half.<sup>6</sup> This view has the advantage of accounting for the second half of the satire as integral to the work. Here Juvenal goes beyond the incident of Egyptian cannibalism, generalizes his attack against the practice, and delivers a protreptic argument for *humanitas*. In the light of the second half, then, the real thesis of the first half of the satire is that cannibalism is a corrupt and malignant practice because it reduces men to the level of animals, as illustrated by recent events at Tentyra. Cannibalism is by this view more important to the overall meaning of the satire than the qualifying adjective, "Egyptian."

<sup>2</sup> *Juvenal the Satirist* (Oxford, 1954), 149-153 and notes, 284-286. J. Lindsay, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1963), 109-121, offers a credulous and confused attempt at a biographical interpretation of the satire.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., the commentaries of J. E. B. Mayor (2 vols., London, 1880-1881<sup>2</sup>), 355-356; L. Friedlaender (Leipzig, 1895), 574; J. D. Duff (Cambridge, 1898; newly edited by M. Coffey, 1970, with introduction), 434-435.

<sup>4</sup> J. De Decker, *Juvenalis Declamans* (Ghent, 1913), 50-54.

<sup>5</sup> R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* (Leipzig, 1906), 27-29, followed recently by E. C. Witke, "Juvenal III: An Eclogue for the Urban Poor," *Hermes*, 90 (1962), 247, note 2. Witke seems unaware that Reitzenstein was opposed long ago by P. Vollmer in *RE*, 19 (1918), 1047 (who like De Decker emphasizes the declamatory nature of the poem). Reitzenstein's argument has again been revived by A. Scobie, *More Essays on the Ancient Romance and its Heritage* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1973; *Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie*, 46), 53-63. Characteristically the first thirteen lines of the poem are ignored, and an inadequate account is given of the entire second half of the poem (93-174).

<sup>6</sup> "The Programs of Juvenal's Later Books," *CP*, 57 (1962), 151 and note 12.

The poem begins with a rhetorical question, *quis nescit?*<sup>7</sup> which implies that the entire satire is to be construed as an elaborate response to a question whose answer ought to be common knowledge. The question also reveals Juvenal's attitude of cynicism, because he assumes everyone must be aware of Egyptian religious insanity. From the outset he rhetorically prejudices the case with the phrase *demens Aegyptos*.

Juvenal exhibits his artistry at its best in the first thirteen lines, a brilliant prologue which establishes a grotesque scene and tone for the entire poem (particularly grotesque is the description of the truncated statue of Memnon at Thebes in lines 5-6). First he lists the exotic animals that the Egyptians worship. These (*portenta*, 2) include the crocodile, ibis, monkey, cat, fish, dog, sheep, and goat. But, as the satirist says in a typically radical generalization, not one soul worships Diana (*nemo Dianam*, 8), a goddess who is notably anthropomorphic and normal in contrast to the Egyptian theriomorphic deities.<sup>7</sup> She also possesses a proper name, which is not true of the strange animal species that Juvenal presents as gods of the Egyptians. In some instances the satirist has reduced well-known Egyptian theriomorphic divinities to the class of beasts, no longer gods with animal features and distinctive names and characteristics, like Thoth, Osiris, and Anubis. In other cases he has deliberately exaggerated certain Egyptian dietary taboos and promoted these animals also to a divine level. Finally, he adds two humble garden vegetables (*porrum et caepe*, 9) and concludes that the Egyptians must be a holy race indeed to be able to pick their gods from their own gardens! Juvenal has thus debased the objects of Egyptian piety, has transformed the gods into animals and vegetables, and has converted Egyptian religion into something grotesque. The prologue is immediate evidence that Juvenal's work is truly satire, a poetry which distorts and exaggerates the facts for effect, and not accurate anthropology.<sup>8</sup>

Further, Juvenal makes use of religious terminology: *portenta*, *colat*, and *adorat* (2), *pavet* (3), *effigies* and *sacri* (4), *venerantur* (8), *nefas violare* (9), *sanctas* (10), *numina* (11), *nefas* (12). Much of the wit in the opening passage of the satire lies in the contradiction between the religious language and bizarre animals and lowly vegetables which are the objects of reverence.

<sup>7</sup> Duff, on line 8, suggests a contrast between the dog as an animal sacred to the Egyptians and Diana as mistress of the hunt at whose altars dogs were often sacrificed.

<sup>8</sup> The references to this satire in J. G. Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Cambridge, 1970), support this view. Especially see 272, where the author remarks that the native evidence does not confirm that Egyptians abstained in general from animal flesh; the suggestion is in fact that only in certain places did there exist an animal taboo and this for special reasons, in a limited sense, and for a limited group. For onions as an object of religious veneration, see *op. cit.*, 280, though this did not always mean dietary abstinence.

With *carnibus humanis vesci licet* (13) the prologue concludes rudely and abruptly, and the last clause marks a change in direction. Yet the first five words in line 9 (*porrum et caepe nefas violare*) introduce three parallel contrasts: between vegetables and human beings (the wrong ones being eaten), between *violare* and *vesci* (each applied to the wrong object), and between *nefas* and *licet*. The satirist here laconically underscores the ridiculous contradiction inherent in "sacred animals and vegetables."

The mention of cannibalism is a proper climax to this opening passage since from the very earliest references in Greek literature it was considered a fundamental distinction of man from the animals that he did not practice cannibalism.<sup>9</sup> Hesiod, an author to whom Juvenal often refers, makes the explicit statement that man is a species which does not eat members of its own kind, whereas the rest of animal creation does (*Works and Days*, 276-281). Like their worship of beasts, cannibalism shows that the Egyptians have given up their humanity.

Juvenal does not maintain the high style and emotional intensity of his indignant attack against the Egyptians, but turns (13-26) to mythological allusion, and whimsically makes reference to the banquet of Alcinous in *Odyssey* 7 and 8. In Juvenal's version, Ulysses' stories of Polyphemus and the Laestrygonians are rejected because cannibalism is so monstrous a crime that the hero must have made it up; it is far easier to accept the other outrageous stories, like those of Scylla, Charybdis, Aeolus' winds, and Circe. The continuity between these lines and the opening of the satire

<sup>9</sup> See H. D. Rankin, "'Eating People is Right': Petronius 141 and a *Topos*," *Hermes*, 97 (1969), 382-383, for the most ancient references to cannibalism; especially *Iliad* 22.346-347, where Achilles claims he could eat Hector raw and this declaration simply indicates that wrath has carried the hero outside of normal humanity, and *Odyssey* 9, where the cannibalism of the Cyclopes is intimately connected with their lawlessness and godlessness.

As late as Diodorus Siculus (1.14.1 and 1.90.1), the view remains that man is a progressive species and does not eat his fellows which in itself constitutes one source of his superiority over the animals. For a list of passages in Greek literature and philosophy on the theme, see W. K. C. Guthrie, *In the Beginning* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1957), 95 and 142-143, note 1; for cannibalism in Diodorus' myth of progress, see E. A. Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (New Haven, 1957), 83-89.

One can also trace the theme as a *topos* in Greek anthropological and geographical writers, beginning with Herodotus (4.18 and 106); for these, see the passages discussed in Tomaschek's article, "Androphagoi," in *RE*, 2 (1894), 2168-2169. In these references cannibalism suggests barbarian men who are lawless and primitive, hence not fully human, as opposed to the fully civilized humanity of the Greek city-states (as, e.g., Aristotle, *Politics*, 1338b, 20-30, who argues that true manly courage is not inculcated by animal ferocity).

is also clear, despite the shift in both content and mood. The first word, *attonito*, "thunderstruck," is the perfect word to mark the reaction of a sane and sober man who is the opposite of the lawless, godless, cannibalistic Cyclopes and Laestrygonians. Alcinous is therefore the prototype of the courteous and humane host, and his affable, civilized reception of Odysseus with a banquet in the *Odyssey* is the exact contrary of the savagely cannibalistic reception given by Polyphemus in Book 9.<sup>10</sup> Homer's Alcinous properly serves Juvenal as inspiration for a model of human behavior which is the reverse of the bestial conduct of the Egyptians.

Alcinous' refusal to believe must also be interpreted both in the context of the entire satire and especially in the light of the opening phrase of the satire, *quis nescit*. Juvenal has deliberately juxtaposed contemporary life and society, where perverted horrors are commonplace, with the world of epic myth, a nobler age of mankind in which even the thought of such perverted actions was outrageous. Juvenal represents contemporary man in his cynical rhetorical question, *quis nescit?*; Alcinous, in his astonishment, the lost age of mythical virtue. Juvenal will use myths for this purpose again in the satire, a technique he had exploited effectively before in the Sixth and Thirteenth Satires.<sup>11</sup> The passage also anticipates the major event of the poem, the act of cannibalism at Tentyra, for the banquet of Alcinous is indeed a *cena* (14), a humane and noble one, contrasted with the drunken *cena* (41) at Tentyra.

So far the satirist has stated his case generally. Juvenal completes the first half of the satire (27-92) with a concrete and vivid illustration of Egyptian religious insanity, which is one of his finest examples of *enargeia*. We should not forget that Juvenal intends this passage to be a particular instance of a more general truth, and we must not regard its narration as the essence of the satire. However, there is more poetry in the narrative itself than has been generally recognized, and this helps to integrate the passage into the structure of the entire satire.

Juvenal in a brief introduction (27-32) insists that the Egyptians have

<sup>10</sup> For Alcinous and his exceptionally civilized Phaeacians as the antitheses of the man-eating and primitive Cyclopes and Laestrygonians, see G. S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge and Berkeley, 1971; Sather Classical Lectures, 40), 162-171. For the significance of Alcinous in the *Odyssey* see also W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, trans. G. Highet (3 vols., Oxford, 1945<sup>2</sup>), vol. 1, 20; and M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (New York, 1965<sup>2</sup>), 92-93 and 105-107.

<sup>11</sup> I agree with M. Morford's insistence that in the Sixth (1-20) and Thirteenth (38-59) the satirist's use of mythology serves a dual function: it not only criticizes the corruption of present times but also naive moralizers who live with outdated attitudes. See "Juvenal's Thirteenth Satire," *AJP*, 94 (1973), 27-28 and note 6.

committed such an act of cannibalism (*gesta*, 28)—recently in the consulship of Iuncus (A.D. 127)<sup>12</sup>—an act so terrible that it outstrips the worst imaginings of reasonable men (*miranda*, 27) and is more horrible than the events that are described in that most brutal and explicitly violent literary form, tragedy. Juvenal has chosen his words very carefully. There is a deliberate tension between *gesta* and *miranda*, reminding us that this preternatural and wondrous act was actually committed by an entire populace. We remain, therefore, in Juvenal's cynical universe where the crimes of one race of contemporary mankind—no matter how commonplace their vices are from one point of view (*quis nescit?*)—are more horrible and incredible than the primitive nastiness related in the ancient myths. The satirist even insists that the crime committed by the Egyptian populace outdoes what was permitted by other peoples to be *portrayed* in tragedy.

This passage contains two echoes of Juvenal's own earlier satires. The reference to the horrors narrated in tragedy reminds us of the close of the Sixth Satire (634–661) where Juvenal insists that the crimes of contemporary women have taken on the dimension of tragic myth. The epilogue in the Sixth therefore breaks down the distinction between myth and contemporary reality (as Mark Morford has recently noticed),<sup>13</sup> whereas the Fifteenth heightens it. On the other hand, the mention of Pyrrha in line 30 recalls the First Satire (81–86), but while the passage in the earlier poem definitely suggests a temporal continuity in human affairs (and in human vices) from the time of the Flood to the present age, the line in the Fifteenth implies that contemporary life (*nostro aevo*, 31–32) can furnish examples of vice that are worse than the most outrageously bloodthirsty events of mythology and literature.

The description of the event at Tentyra as *dira feritas* (32) is a key expression and the focal point of the first half of the satire. *Dira*, a word of religious significance often associated with portents and other exceptional phenomena,<sup>14</sup> here looks back to *portenta* (2) and the other religious terms clustered in the opening passage. The preternatural, even monstrous, quality of Egyptian religion is thereby reinforced. *Feritas* looks forward to the act of cannibalism, viewed as pathology, to imply that the Egyptians

<sup>12</sup> The date of A.D. 127 for Iuncus' consulship was established by B. Borghesi, "Intorno all' età di Giovenale," *Oeuvres Complètes* 5 (Paris, 1869), 49–76. More recent scholarship has tended only to confirm it. See, e.g., Coffey, 169; Knoche, 90; Syme, 775 (all cited above, note 1).

<sup>13</sup> "A Note on Juvenal 6.627–661," *CP*, 67 (1972), 198.

<sup>14</sup> See *TLL*, s.v. "*dirus*" in its older, stricter usage (vol. 5, pars 1, cols. 1268–1270).

who behave like animals are reduced to the level of the beasts by their savagery.<sup>15</sup>

The poet then introduces the story of Ombi and Tentyra (33-44) and assures us that the rivalry between the two cities (*vetus atque antiqua similtas*, 33) is not even of the human order because he characterizes it hyperbolically as *immortale odium* (34). Juvenal once again has deliberately clustered his terms to indicate that this *similtas* is a horrible and inhuman pathology. He uses the metaphorical phrase, *numquam sanabile vulnus* (34), to describe it, but a series of other terms reinforces it: *ardet*, 35; *summus furor*, 35-36; *odit*, 37; and *inimicorum*, 40—a language of hatred and enmity that contrasts strongly with the satirist's description of the inhabitants of the two cities as *finitimos* (33) and *vicinorum* (36). In addition, Juvenal makes no distinction between the two cities when it comes to this *odium*; *utrumque* (35) and *uterque locus* (37) make that certain. Consequently, although Tentyra was the special cult center of Hathor, goddess of love and gaiety, it is no less guilty of embittered and exclusive religious passions than Ombi, the religious center of Set, god of darkness, and the more aggressive city in Juvenal's account.

The satirist establishes a second set of terms in opposition to the vocabulary of *odium* when he sets the scene at Tentyra's seven-day religious festival and describes it as a public banquet for its animal god. The scene is, in brief, a *cena*: *tempore festo*, 38; *laetum hilaremque diem* and *magnae gaudia cenae*, 41; *positis ad templa et compita mensis*, 42; and *pervigilique toro*, 43. Here we have a feast, a religious one, where men ought to enjoy pleasurable company and civilized affection. Yet Juvenal interlaces the passage with words for hostility and impending conflict so that the festive atmosphere is perverted by horror and cruelty.

Juvenal again announces his own personal attitude toward these events (44-46):

<sup>15</sup> See *TLL*, s.v. "*feritas*," "*ferus*," and "*fera*." In its narrow sense, when applied to men, *feritas* concerns habits and characteristics that belong by nature to beasts; in a wider sense the term refers (as it also does when applied to animals) to concepts like *vehementia*, *atrocitas*, *crudelitas*, and *rabies*. See vol. 6, pars 1, col. 602, line 24; and col. 519, lines 10-11 and 71-73, respectively.

For Seneca's *De ira* as the philosophical background to Juvenal's literary presentations of emotional pathologies in this and other satires, see W. S. Anderson, "Anger in Juvenal and Seneca," *UCPCPh*, 19 (1964), especially the section entitled "The Angry Man," 160-165, where the author refers to Seneca's refutation of *ira* as a virtue (163): "Similarly, when (his) *adversarius* invokes spirited beasts such as lions to exemplify the nobility of wrath, Seneca lets him convict himself. Lions and wolves do possess *feritas* and *rabies* that can be considered as analogous to *ira*, but only because *ira* itself debases Man to the level of the beasts (cf. *De ira*, 2.16)."

horrida sane  
Aegyptos, sed luxuria, quantum ipse notavi,  
barbara famoso non cedit turba Canopo.

In the first place, this transitional passage suggests a poetic reminiscence of earlier views of Canopus in the Sixth Satire (83-84), where Eppia the wife of a senator has committed an act so shameful in running off with a gladiator that even Canopus, ill-famed though it is, can condemn the morals of Roman women. In the second place, we should consider these lines in the light of what the satirist had already said about the most notorious product of Canopus, Domitian's pretorian prefect, Crispinus. As early as the First Satire (26-29), he is portrayed as an outrageous example of the vice of *luxuria*; in the Fourth (1-33), his *luxuria* in paying an inordinately large amount for a fish to grace his table is an effective prelude to Juvenal's later attack on the Emperor in precisely the same matter of a large fish. At the rhombus-council the satirist again has Crispinus parade his *luxuria* (108-109):

et matutino sudans Crispinus amomo  
quantum vix redolent duo funera, . . .

Therefore, the reference to Egyptian *luxuria* echoes the earlier satires of Juvenal where Canopus served as a typical example of the vice.<sup>16</sup>

The phrase, *quantum ipse notavi*, creates a different problem. Since the time of Friedlaender's commentary, *quantum* has been commonly interpreted to mean "as." The lines are then rendered "as I myself have noticed"—which naturally suggests that the satirist had had personal experience of the Egyptians; and this in turn might serve to confirm the notice in the *vitae* that Juvenal had spent time in Egypt as an exile.<sup>17</sup> However, if *quantum* can possess its original, more usual, and classical meaning "as much as," the entire phrase would suggest a limitation in the satirist's experience: "as much as I myself have noted." I propose that we not emphasize the significance of the phrase in order to have it add an element of topicality to the satire or furnish a tempting autobiographical

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, 51.3, for Canopus, like Baiae, as *deversorium vitiorum*.

<sup>17</sup> Friedlaender, on line 45, following Müller, translates *quantum* as "was" or "wie," but his major witnesses are Apuleius, the *Historia Augusta*, Augustine, and other writers who are even later. In this interpretation of *quantum* he has been followed by Duff, *loc. cit.*, and most recently by P. Green in his English translation (Penguin Books, 1967), 290, n. 10.

For the usual classical sense of the adverb, *quantum*, in a limiting sense, see the list of passages from Terence in S. Ashmore, *The Comedies of Terence* (New York, 1908), on *Andria*, 207; confirmed by Lewis and Short, s.v. "*quantus*," and Forcellini, s.v. "*quantus*," No. 31. The Loeb translator, Ramsay, renders the Juvenalian phrase, "so far as I myself have noted." This is preferable to Friedlaender's forced and artificial interpretation.



reference in a poet who otherwise tells us little about himself. The phrase does not necessarily mean that Juvenal traveled to Egypt to acquire knowledge of Egyptian vice. The satirist states a commonplace: Canopus is infamous (*famoso*) and—to the best of his knowledge—the rest of the Egyptians are no better. Using the passage in the satire to substantiate the legend of the exile mentioned in the *vitae* improperly reverses the logic of interpretation because the theory of his exile probably originated in these lines of the satire.<sup>18</sup>

But beyond the issue of Juvenal's autobiographical remark, these lines are important to the poetry of the satire because of the paradoxical way in which the adjective *horrida* and the noun *luxuria* are equally applicable to the Egyptians. The only other passage in Juvenal where *horrida* is applied to a nation is in the Eighth Satire (116), where the satirist advises his addressee, Ponticus, that he may properly despise the Greeks and other effeminate and unmilitary races if he becomes governor of a province, but that *horrida Hispania*, a martial and vigorous land, should be avoided. The word *horrida* well describes a barbarian region like Spain, one of whose tribes is contrasted with the Egyptians in the second half of the Fifteenth, but which is so primitive that the term *luxuria* is inapplicable. Juvenal's comment here at 44–46 anticipates the distinction he later makes between the Egyptians as cannibals and other barbarians as cannibals: the former alone display *luxuria*.

*Luxuria* is readily associated with drunkenness, as it was previously in the Sixth Satire (300–313), and the description of the stupor of the Tentyrans (47–50) serves as a transition. At this point the *cena* is transformed completely into a *rixa* (51–62), which the satirist depicts as a *bellum* using military language: *sonare*, 51; *tuba*, 52; *clamore, concurratur*, and *teli*, 53; *volnere*, 54; *certamine*, 55; *agmina*, 56; *exercere acies*, 60; *turbae*, 61; and *impetus*, 62. This is, in exaggerated terms, a battle that brings to fully developed form the earlier identification of hatred as a *volnus*: *paucae sine volnere malae*, 54; *nulli . . . nasus integer*, 55–56; *vultus dimidios*, 56–57; *alias facies*, 57; *hiantia ruptis ossa genis*, 57–58; and *plenos oculorum sanguine pugnos*, 58. Juvenal here succeeds perfectly in giving us a vivid physical portrayal of pathological emotion (the latter also set forth, in the terms *odium*, 51, *animis ardentibus*, 52, and *saevit*, 54).

Then he turns again to the world of myth (65–68) for a comparison and imitates a Homeric formula which describes one of the heroes picking up a

<sup>18</sup> See above, note 1. Scobie (above, note 5), 54, also rejects Friedlaender's autobiographical interpretation of *quantum ipse notavi*, but further notes, 59, how Juvenal describes his own account of the act of cannibalism as a *fabula* in line 72, which suggests a tongue-in-cheek attitude toward the event.

great stone to hurl at his enemies, a feat that not two men could *now* (in the time of the narrator) perform.<sup>19</sup> But Juvenal has also expanded the formula (69-70):

nam genus hoc vivo iam decrescebat Homero,  
terra malos homines nunc educat atque pusillos;

The satirist is comparing the Egyptians of his day to the heroes of the *Iliad* in an unfavorable light, but generalizing (line 70 refers to all contemporary men, not just to the Egyptians), Juvenal also says mankind has degenerated a long way from Homer's own time.<sup>20</sup> Alluding to Hesiod's description of his own times as an Iron Age (*Works and Days*, 174-201), Juvenal had employed an analogous myth of human degeneration in the programmatic Thirteenth Satire (28-30) where he referred to the contemporary world, satirically and hyperbolically, as a *nona aetas*, an age so bad that there was no metal base enough to describe it.<sup>21</sup>

The satirist now climaxes the scene of battle between the two towns at the central moment in the satire (72-92): the Tentyrans are forced into flight, one unfortunate citizen slips and falls in his frenzy to escape, the Ombians tear him limb from limb and devour him on the spot. At once comical and horrible,<sup>22</sup> the episode sums up *ieiunum odium* (51): the Ombians' hatred is literally starved. The cannibalistic banquet is described with words like *voluptatem* (90) and *gustat* (92), and the victim has been transformed into victuals (*hac carne*, 88). The picture of those Ombians who were too slow to get any of the meat scraping the ground with their fingers for the last drops of blood is a vivid illustration of the adjective *ieiunum*. Figuratively, the act of cannibalism is the culmination of insane anger, and it proves that the Egyptians have abandoned their humanity.

For good reasons, then, Juvenal inserts another allusion to myth (84-87), the story of Prometheus' theft of fire from the gods on behalf of mankind. Juvenal rejoices because fire, the use of which distinguishes men

<sup>19</sup> This formula appears in the *Iliad* at 5.302-304 (Diomedes) and 20.285-287 (Aeneas); with variation at 12.381-383 (Ajax) and 12.445-449 (Hector). For the Vergilian imitation which refers to Turnus, see *Aeneid*, 12.896-900.

<sup>20</sup> I also note that *hoc genus* in line 69 refers generally to "the race of man" (translating with Ramsay in the Loeb); confirmed in Mayor's comment on line 70.

<sup>21</sup> See my earlier study, "Calvinus in Juvenal's Thirteenth Satire," *Arethusa*, 4 (1971), 220 and 229, note 8.

<sup>22</sup> Twice in this satire Juvenal seems to propose that our reaction to evil should maintain a paradoxical balance between anger and laughter. In line 15 he speaks of *bilem aut risum* as a listener's choice of reactions to Ulysses' stories of cannibalism. At line 71 he says that god himself *ridet et odit* when he views the Egyptians, men who are simultaneously evil and puny (*malos atque pusillos*, 70). Throughout the satire, Juvenal's own narrative moves back and forth between the two responses to correspond to what he says in these two quasi-programmatic lines.

from the beasts according to the myth, was not polluted by the Egyptians since they ate their victim raw! This paradox is a perfect way of topping off the first half of the satire and of reinforcing the conclusion to be drawn from the practice of cannibalism: these Egyptians are inhuman. The cumulative effect of Juvenal's imagery and mythological references is to identify the Egyptians with beasts, and this is the overall consequence of the first half of the satire.

At line 93, Juvenal's argument begins to reflect on itself, and while I certainly agree with Highet<sup>23</sup> that the second half of the satire is to be divided into two parts, 93-131 and 131-174, I would go one step further and also suggest that 93-131 are closely related to 33-92 and 131-174 must be linked to 1-32. Consequently, the opening and closing passages of the satire are related.

When he refers to the Celtiberian Vascones (93-106), Juvenal keeps to the theme of the previous section, cannibalism, but he introduces several obvious and important differences (*res diversa*, 94). To begin with, this passage contrasts the "active" cannibalism of the Egyptians with the "passive" cannibalism of the Vascones who were reduced by a siege to eating their own dead. This latter type of cannibalism is mentioned, for example, in Plutarch's *Lucullus* (11), where Mithridates' troops are described as forced into this practice in the war against Cyzicus, and in Pseudo-Quintilian's twelfth declamation, *Cadaveribus Pasti*, in which a legate in command of the grain supply is supposed to defend himself against the charge that he was derelict in his duty and caused an entire town to devour corpses in order to survive. Although a distinction between these types of cannibalism might be sufficient for a moral tract, Juvenal's poem is not just one-dimensional moral philosophy, and so he makes other contrasts which relate to the themes and language established earlier in the satire.

The cannibalism takes place as a last resort during a siege in a *real war* between two martial peoples, yet even their own enemies felt pity for their misfortunes (*hostibus ipsis . . . miserantibus*, 100-101). Juvenal is even more explicit: the gods themselves (103) and the dead who were devoured (105) could forgive them. And this must contrast with the Egyptian towns who expressed only *odium* toward each other.

Juvenal does not abandon the vocabulary of anger which he had used so effectively to characterize the Egyptians; he transforms it. He speaks of *invidia* (95), but it is an impersonal envy due to misfortune and war, and he uses the expression *vacui ventris furor* (100), meaning that it was real physical starvation that compelled the horrible, crazed cannibalism of the

<sup>23</sup> Above (note 2), 285, note 2.

Vascones. In the case of the Egyptians, bestial and pathological fury led to cannibalism since starvation was only a metaphor for inhuman passions (*ieiunum odium*, 51; reiterated at line 131, *similes ira atque fames*). So Juvenal employs the key phrase *dira egestas* (96) for the Vascones to correspond to his earlier description of Egyptian anger as *dira feritas* in line 32.

Juvenal marshals every poetic resource to reinforce the ideas of *invidia fortunae* (95) and *dira egestas* (96), because these barbarian tribesmen have been reduced *physically* in every possible way. Terms like *pallorem*, *maciem*, or *tenuis artus* (101) or *lacerabant* (102) vividly express how these men were physically reduced by their sufferings. This contrasts with the normal physical puniness of the Egyptians, a theme stated in lines 126–128:

hac saevit rabie inbelle et inutile volgus,  
parvula fictilibus solitum dare vela phaselis  
et brevibus pictae remis incumbere testae.

This is a brilliant synecdoche, scornfully characterizing the pettiness of the Egyptians by means of their tiny earthenware craft fitted out with little sails and oars, and it should be contrasted with the two preceding lines where various barbarian nations (not just those of Spain) are described with the terms *terribiles*, *truces*, and *immanes*.

Another contrast is suggested by line 104: *ventribus . . . dira atque immania passis*, which describes how the tribesmen have suffered. But Juvenal insists that the Egyptians have committed terrible acts: *detestabile monstrum audere* (121–122; restated with *monstra* in line 172 which refers again to the act of cannibalism at Tentyra).<sup>24</sup> This clarifies Juvenal's argument that the barbarians of Spain can be pardoned since they passively endured to commit a monstrous act when they were forced to cannibalism, while the Egyptians actively committed a monstrous crime.

With the phrase *mollissima corda* in line 131 we reach the final section of the satire and the final transformation of Juvenal's argument. He makes a

<sup>24</sup> For Juvenal's use of *monstrum* (altogether thirteen times in the satires), see J. R. C. Martyn, "A New Approach to Juvenal's First Satire," *Antichthon*, 4 (1970), 61, note 31: four times for sexual perversion (2.122, 143; 6.286; 9.38); twice for monstrous individuals (4.2, 115); twice for murderesses (6.645, 647); twice for cannibalism (15.121, 172); and once for unnatural honesty (13.65). Martyn categorizes these eleven references as "unnatural perversions of human behavior." The two remaining occurrences (4.45 and 14.283) refer clearly to real "monsters."

I would, however, go beyond the literal meaning of the word, and I would interpret it here in the light of other words that Juvenal uses for the preternaturally horrible religion of the Egyptians (*portenta*, 2) as well as his description of their passions as *dira feritas* (32). The overall idea of "preternatural monstrosity" encompasses the monstrous objects of their religious passions, their pathological anger, and the actual monstrous act of cannibalism.

positive plea for pity and fellow-feeling which represent the best human emotion (*optima sensus*, 133) and which define us as *men* and distinguish us from the animals (142–143). In contrast to *ira* and kindred terms he used earlier, Juvenal now develops another set of words: *lacrimas*, 133; *plorare*, 134; *fletu*, 136; and *gemimus*, 138. This not only generalizes what was said earlier for the particular instance of the Vascones in lines 93–106, but twice Juvenal states explicitly that *natura* itself (132 and 138) justifies his argument that pity is fundamental to human nature. Unlike anger, which is a mutually exclusive and divisive emotion, *lacrimae* express a principle of universal inclusion, something which belongs to all men as part of their natural being and which can be shared by all: *quis enim bonus . . . ulla aliena sibi credit mala?* (140–142).

In lines 143–147, Juvenal describes man as a creature who raises his face to the heavens while animals look at the ground. This seems to be a reminiscence of Ovid's story of Prometheus' creation of man (*Met.*, 1.76–88), which makes the same distinction between man and the rest of the animals.<sup>25</sup> C. P. Segal has made an interesting observation on the Ovidian passage which can shed light on its parallel in Juvenal. Segal remarks that it "presents an essentially Stoic view of man as *sanctius animal* formed in the image of the all-ruling gods, standing erect and beholding the heavens and the stars (I, 76–88). Yet the ensuing narrative of the Four Ages dwells not on man's kinship with the divine, but rather on his capacity for evil and violence."<sup>26</sup> The statement can be applied also to this satire, because Juvenal develops the same contrast between the best and worst in man's capabilities, although the negative side is emphasized in most of the satire.

In subsequent lines (147–158), Juvenal represents the human race as having a community of shared interests based on a sense of universal fellow-feeling (*mutuus adfectus*, 149–150). Here the satirist's portrayal of how men originally joined together, built homes and cities, and aided one another in war and peace is in accord with traditional views in Graeco-Roman culture:

The standard set by the Greeks for the true man varied to some extent according to the point of view of the thinker, but always, with one notable

<sup>25</sup> The connection between the two passages has been noticed by G. Highet, "Juvenal's Bookcase," *AJP*, 72 (1951), 385, and by E. Thomas, "Ovidian Echoes in Juvenal," in N. I. Herescu, *Ovidiana* (Paris, 1958), 508. In a later article, "Some Aspects of Ovidian Influence on Juvenal," *Orpheus*, 7 (1960), 35, Thomas has commented that Juvenal's debt to Ovid in choice of subject-matter, theme, and philosophy becomes more marked from the Tenth Satire onwards.

<sup>26</sup> "Myth and Philosophy in the *Metamorphoses*: Ovid's Augustanism and the Augustan Conclusion of Book XV," *AJP*, 90 (1969), 262.

exception (the Cynics), it involved the idea that a man really worthy of the name is one fitted to be a member of human society and play his part in the life of the community. Homer's Cyclops, Protagoras' "misanthrope," and Aristotle's "cityless" man all stand outside the true human pattern because they are incapable of social and political association with normal men.<sup>27</sup>

Lines 149-158 accumulate examples of *concordia*. As a definition of man this *concordia* is also the exact contrary of *odium*, but Juvenal goes beyond literary and philosophical commonplaces through his emphasis on *lacrimae* as a concrete, physical anticipation of the more abstract and intellectual *adfectus*. If irrational anger turns men into beasts, it is reasonable for the satirist to look upon the *sensus* (146)<sup>28</sup> the gods gave us at our creation as our special way of identifying ourselves with the gods, instead of with the beasts as the Egyptians did.

At lines 159-164 Juvenal's poem achieves a humorous contradiction when he defends the ideals of *concordia* and *communitas* with an appeal to the natural nobility of the animals! Previously Juvenal had tried to argue against our identifying with animals, beginning with the catalogue of exotic beasts worshipped by the Egyptians in lines 1-13; here, using this menagerie—lions, boars, tigers, and bears—he insists that the beasts are morally superior to man in his present degraded state. He is most cynical and paradoxical when he states that serpents have a *maior concordia* than contemporary men do (159), because *concordia* ought, on the basis of the preceding lines of the poem, to be the human virtue *par excellence* and the distinguishing characteristic of the human species.

The conclusion of the satire (165-174) may be analyzed into three brief components. In the first (165-168), Juvenal alludes to the end of Saturn's Golden Age when men committed a primeval crime by forging weapons.<sup>29</sup> Even war is too little (*parum*, 166) for the Egyptians, and they must go one step further in their degeneracy. In his second comment (169-171), Juvenal returns specifically to the act of Egyptian cannibalism not mentioned since line 131 because he intended to present a contrasting view of human nature. Again the connection is made between *ira* as an illegitimate

<sup>27</sup> H. C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge, 1965), 202, a passage which also summarizes what Roman thought adapted from the Greek. *Concordia* is an equivalent of the Greek *homonoia* (cf. *op. cit.*, 154), whereas *humanitas*—a term that Juvenal does not use—translates the Greek *philanthropia* (for which cf. Jaeger [above, note 10], vol. 3, 310, note 75). Baldry further notes, 201, that Cicero (who like Juvenal also uses *genus humanum* for the species, "man") specifies "humanity" in the sense of "mankind" with the phrases *communitas* and *societas generis humani*.

<sup>28</sup> The word in 146 may repeat its use and meaning in line 133. Duff, on 146, comments that "*sensus* must here mean much the same as *communis sensus*, 'sympathy,'" as in 8.73, too.

<sup>29</sup> Vergil, *Georgics*, 2.539-540, mentions that under Saturn there were neither wars nor forged weapons, a theme restated in Ovid, *Met.*, 1.97-99.

emotion and the reduction of men to a form of food (*genus cibi*, 171, not *genus humanum* as at 132; with a reminiscence of *carnibus humanis* in 13).

Finally, the third comment is the coda of the satire which reflects upon the first thirteen lines in several ways (171-174):

quid diceret ergo  
vel quo non fugeret, si nunc haec monstra videret  
Pythagoras, cunctis animalibus abstinuit qui  
tamquam homine et ventri indulsit non omne legumen?<sup>30</sup>

The Pythagoras of popular lore was believed to have maintained taboos regarding both animal flesh and beans, so he is analogous to the Egyptians as they appeared in the opening passage of the satire. Yet for Pythagoras the abstentions were based on a belief that beans and animals were equal to men (*tamquam homine*), and his views therefore promoted the lower forms to higher ones; Juvenal says of the Egyptians that their practices demote higher forms (men) to lower (food).

It is significant for the structure of the entire poem that it ends as it began, with a question. This rhetorical technique must be viewed as Juvenal's means of framing the entire content of the poem,<sup>31</sup> so that at its conclusion the poem remains ambiguous, balanced between two contrary impulses: one in the original *quis nescit?* suggesting that corruption is a commonplace in corrupt times, and the other revealed in the human and humane morality of Alcinous and Pythagoras, for whom the only reaction to such inhuman horrors must be speechlessness or flight.

<sup>30</sup> Juvenal's Pythagoras is an allusion to what R. A. Swanson has called "Ovid's Pythagorean Essay" (*CJ*, 54 [1958-1959], 21-24) in *Met.*, 15.60-478, a passage which, it must be remarked, reflects on Ovid's creation story in *Met.* 1. W. R. Johnson, "The Problem of the Counter-classical Sensibility and its Critics," *CSCA*, 3 (1970), 138-143, has an important interpretation of Ovid's Pythagoras and his views on vegetarianism as a caricature because the legendary philosopher's morality—however much it accurately criticizes the predatory nature of man—is pathetic in the context of a depraved world. Segal (above, note 26), 287, has recognized that Ovid's purpose throughout the *Metamorphoses* was to disclaim myth as offering a picture of a better, more moral world.

<sup>31</sup> I borrow the idea of a "frame" technique from W. S. Anderson, "Juvenal 6: A Problem in Structure," *CP*, 51 (1956), 74: "in the conclusion (or epilogue), often hyperbolic, often, too, deprecatingly humorous, the satirist rounds off the structure by reverting to some of the ideas of the prologue as clarified in the heart of the satire." I suggest, too that *monstra* (172) is related to *portenta* (2) as discussed above, note 24.

For Juvenal's rhetorical questions throughout the satires, see De Decker (above, note 4), 177-186, whose list includes lines 1-2 but not 171-174, despite the hyperbole in *quo non fugeret* and the humorous effect produced by ending the satire with a question. As early as the Second Satire (1-3), the satirist had proposed a fantastic escape from unbearable immorality. J. Adamietz, *Untersuchungen zu Juvenal* (Wiesbaden, 1972; *Hermes Einzelschriften*, 26), 42 and note 96, has also made this thematic connection between 2.1-3 and 15.171-174.

There seems to be no answer to the satirist's paradox: mankind (not just the Egyptians; Juvenal's theme has become general by lines 131-164) can neither remain where it is, in a corrupted state inferior to the beasts, nor return to the ideal virtue of a bygone and lost age. The mythical worlds of Alcinous and Pythagoras do not seem to offer suitable models for contemporary man.<sup>32</sup>

Cynical common knowledge or inapplicable moral attitudes? Juvenal leaves the question and his satire unresolved, just one more example of the irony that had increasingly become the satirist's forte since the Seventh Satire and had practically become a mannerism with the Thirteenth. In its total significance, then, the poem is not simply a satire on the Egyptians or a moral tract on the commonplace theme of cannibalism or for that matter a definition of "mankind" based on the emotion of pity. With self-contained ambivalence, Juvenal's poem does seem to modulate between two possible reactions to evil in the world, outrage and astonishment on the one hand and cynical worldly wisdom on the other. In this final manifestation of his craftsmanship, Juvenal offers a satire that is thoroughly structured in whole and in part, a satire that is carefully organized in terms of special vocabularies and repeated key terms, but as a moral statement the poem is anything but explicit, concluding as it does in witty self-effacement.

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<sup>32</sup> See above, notes 11 and 30. Cf. D. Wiesen, "Juvenal and the Intellectuals," *Hermes* 101 (1973), 482-483, who speaks of the satirist's "simultaneous use of a double point of view" in Satires 2, 6, 7 and 13; Juvenal not only mocks the corruption of his own times but the conventional interpretations of myth and history which pictured a more virtuous world.